

## In The Good Old Summertime.

Something else all kids did when the weather turned warm. We never knew who was first or last, but every kid in the city would shed his shoes and go barefooted.

Every now and then, you would stub your big toe and, boy, it would hurt and bleed. But, that was just a way of life in the thirties and forties. You never see a kid going barefoot any more.

Another thing we did, we would all walk the streets and check all the gutters for match covers because every body saved and traded them. Cigarette lighters were never seen. People with good jobs or rich people would have Ronsons. Book matches were the big thing. Of course, housewives always had wooden matches in the kitchen.

You never see kids shooting marbles anymore. But, when we were kids, every boy and some girls would have a bag of marbles. No body ever bought new ones. You had to win them or lose them. I'm still pretty good at it. A few guys would have a Mooney. It was a little bigger and harder.



you always avoided him. There would be about twenty or thirty games going on at Sheep Hill Park. It was the twenty one hundred block of Preston St.

Another thing we would do is go to the Park and look for four leaf clovers. I don't remember ever finding one, but some kids did. In the winter time our hands would freeze. We always watched for a stray glove that some one lost.

Some where around 1936 or 37, the skies became black over Highlandtown. You could hardly see across the street. Every one followed the smoke to Canton. The big oil tanks were on fire. Standard oil tanks were burning for days. Of course, we had to go and watch. How could you pass up excitement, like that?

Historians might call me on this but my long time memory is good. It was 1936. We looked up in the sky and we saw this giant blimp going slowly over Highlandtown. You had to run from block to block to see all of it. It was about three blocks long. I remember people saying it was the



Hindenberg, a German Zeppelin. I don't know if that was when it blew up and burned at Lakehurst, New Jersey or another time.

Something else happened around 1938. A girl was killed and cut up. They were finding body parts in the sewer holes all over the city. Us kids were lifting up manhole covers looking for body parts. Everybody was looking for the head, so she could be identified. Well, some body found it but we didn't.

Crime wasn't too bad back then because there weren't any drugs around. The only thing we ever heard about was the Loco weed in the Zane Gray western books. I guess that was marijuana.

Some body was murdered on Loney's Lane off Edison Highway and for years we wouldn't go anywhere near the Clay Hills off Edison Highway.

He always had something going. Any body who had a nickel could buy a Dixie cup of ice cream. When you took the lid off, you would peel off this paper



and there would be a black and white picture of a movie star like Shirley Temple or Lon Mix. He would save and trade them for others. God knows whatever happened to them. He saw some at Shupper Grove in Penna. "Antique Acres". They were \$25.00 each. You wonder how we could have done all these things when we were growing up.

I'm going to fast forward a little bit. When Pep and I were 17 and 15 we joined the Maryland Minute Men. The war was on and we wanted to help out. It was a form of "State Guard". He would drill at the Mansion House in Druid Hill Park. He had rifles and we would stand guard at Power Plants and Dams. On my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday I was inducted into the United States Army. I still have my discharge from the Minute Men. It was signed by the Governor of Md. - Herbert R. O'Connor.

Md. Minute Men.

P.S. Pep boosted me up by saying we were the men behind the Gun.

(After watching the History Channel I was wrong. Brother Martin

The Hindenburg crashed & Burned in '1937)

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